

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENT

Support for the amendment to claims 1 and 6 is found in claims 3, 4 and 9 as previously presented and on page 18, lines 4-12 of the specification. No new matter would be added to this application by entry of this amendment.

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1, 2, 5-8 and 10-15 will now be active in this application.

### REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

The claimed invention is directed to a softening detergent composition, a washing method and a method for preparing a softening detergent composition.

Detergent compositions having a softening effect have been developed in order to address fiber stiffness often associated with washing. Inadequate softening effects have been obtained by addition of conventional clay material such as smectite. Formulations containing clay materials have been reported but have yet to provide entirely satisfactory result. Thus, softening detergent formulations are sought.

The claimed invention addresses this problem by providing a softening detergent composition comprising (a) 1-30 wt.% of a clay mineral **of montmorillonite**, (b) 0.5-20 wt.% of a sodium carbonate-hydrogen peroxide adduct, (c) 0.1-20 wt.% of an aromatic ester sulfate alt or aromatic ester carboxylate salt, (d) 0.4-20 wt. % of **a fatty acid salt**, a component corresponding to a surfactant other than component (d) which comprise 35-70 % by mass of an alkylbenzenesulfonate and 10-60 wt. % of a surfactant as prescribed in JIS K 3362:1998. Applicants have discovered the combination of **sodium carbonate-hydrogen peroxide adduct**, an aromatic ester sulfate or carboxylate, with a clay mineral **of montmorillonite**, **fatty acid salt**, surfactant other than (d) which comprises 35-70 wt. % of an alkylbenzenesulfonate and proscribed surfactant to provide for an enhanced softening effect. Such a composition is nowhere disclose or suggested in the cited references of record.

The rejection of claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Baeck et al EP 297,673 as affirmed by Jayawant U.S. 3,860,694 is respectfully traversed.

*No Disclosure Of Montmorillonite Clay Material*

Baeck et al. fails to disclose or suggest a clay mineral of montmorillonite in a softening detergent composition.

Baeck et al. describes a detergent softening comprising a fabric softening clay (see abstract). The clay component is described as a smectite-type clay selected based on its layer of charge properties. Hectorite clays of natural origin are described on page 2 as having a layer charge distribution such that at least 50% is in the range of 0.23-0.31. Hectorite clays are identified as having an unusually great propensity for deposition onto fabrics, relative to conventional smectite-type clays or of synthetic hectorites. A clay mineral of montmorillonite is not disclosed and is different from a hectorite clay.

In contrast, the claimed invention is directed to a softening detergent composition comprising 1-30 mass % of a clay mineral of montmorillonite. Applicants note that the claims have been amended to recite that the claim mineral is montmorillonite. As the cited reference fails to disclose or suggest a clay mineral of montmorillonite, the claimed invention is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by this reference and accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

The rejection of claims 1, 2 and 5-7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Baker et al. U.S. 2002/0128165 as affirmed by Jayawant U.S. 3,860,694 is respectfully traversed.

Applicants note that claim 1 has been amended to include all of the limitations of claim 4, which has not been rejected over this reference. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

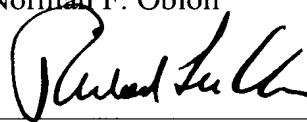
The examiner is respectfully advised of a typographical error which applicants have detected in their specification. The disclosure on page 19, lines 13-16 and line 21 as to 4-40 % by mass of component (d) is in error and should have described the alkylbenzenesulfonate content. Applicants further note that page 40, lines 13-14 and the Kubota declaration of April

27, 2009 report the use of Laundrosil DGA 212, a bentonite clay, when a montmorillonite clay was used. Applicants note that their' prior reliance on the experimental data was not persuasive to the examiner, at a time when the specific identity of the clay material was not at issue. Applicants' current arguments in which the identity of the clay material as montmorillonite do not rely on the experimental data, at this time.

Applicants submit that this application is now in condition for allowance and early notification of such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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